

Reflection Guide

To Accompany Your NeighborGood
Guide Journey



NEIGHBORGOOD GUIDE

FOR YOU - AND EVERYONE WHO LIVES AROUND YOU



In the Reflection Guide

If you've signed up for the NeighborGood Guide email journey, you'll receive one email per week over the course of six weeks, inviting you to explore the different facets of life unhoused and what each of us can do to create solutions to homelessness.

Each email will include prompts for reflection on yourself, your community, and direct you to resources on the NeighborGood Guide site for a deeper dive.

The prompts in this Reflection Guide match those in the email series, but enable you to experience the Guide at your own pace and provide some shape for your own internal process and discussion should you wish to include others.

Notes for Groups

The NeighborGood Guide is a journey, and like any journey, it's even better when it's experienced with others.

Use this Reflection Guide to facilitate discussion if you choose to share with your friends, family, coworkers, book clubs, or anyone else you care about.

Rebecca's Story

The NeighborGood Guide journey begins with Rebecca's story. Make sure everyone in your group has had the opportunity to hear her story before your first meeting.

[Hear Rebecca's Story](#)

A Personal—and Shared—Journey

Make sure each member of your group has signed up (for themselves) to receive the weekly NeighborGood Guide emails. That way, everyone will get the prompts and have their own space to consider things aside from your group discussions.

[Sign Up for the Guided Journey Here](#)

Who's in your group?

We'd recommend inviting two to six people to participate in your group discussion. Putting a cap on the number of people participating helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to share.

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Accepting the Invitation

By being here, you've accepted the invitation to start seeing yourself, your city, and the people who inhabit it with new understanding. Together, we'll explore your power to create solutions to homelessness in San Francisco.



Reflection on Self

Listen to [Rebecca's story](#) (again, or for the first time if you haven't had the chance to do that yet).

- What surprised you about her story?
- What about her experience resonated with you?
- What commonalities do you have with her?



Reflection on Community

How would you describe the last person you encountered who was currently living outside? How has hearing Rebecca's story challenged your understanding of homelessness?



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Reflections & Discussion Questions

Confronting Our Own Mindsets

As humans, we're wired to categorize and make sense of the world around us. We can't help doing it. But we can help ourselves by stepping back and becoming aware of the frames and boxes our brains have constructed by asking ourselves whether they're accurate and fair.



Reflection on Self

Consider the last unhoused person you encountered.

- What did you notice about them?
- What went through your mind when you saw them?
- How did you behave toward them?
- How did they behave toward you?
- Were you nervous or anxious?
- Ask yourself the 'why' behind all of your answers to these questions.

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Confronting Our Own Mindsets



Reflection on Community

Our values as a society are measured by how we treat the most vulnerable among us. We know factors that contribute to or detract from a person's vulnerability in San Francisco include their race, gender, and sexual orientation.

It can be easy to overlook the systemic inequities and injustices that have made it extremely difficult or impossible for many of our neighbors to stay or be housed.

- What does our homelessness crisis say about our society as a whole?
- How does this make you feel?
- What questions does it bring to your mind?

Go Deeper: [Take the NeighborGood Guide Quiz](#)

- What did you learn?
- What was surprising?



Reflections & Discussion Questions

Interconnectivity

Many of us tend to think about our decisions primarily in terms of their impact on our own lives: What we wear, eat, listen to, where we live, go to school, or work, the social networks we're part of—the list goes on and on. But the more we know about ourselves, our communities, and the wider world we're part of, the more we see how our decisions (big and small) aren't made in a vacuum.

Our choices influence and are influenced by our identity, circumstances, and opportunities—all of which are linked to and in turn impact the realities of the people and environment around us.



Reflection on Self

- Where are you right now, as you read this?
- What led you here?
- What opportunities and circumstances made you able to make the choices you did?
- What realities in your identity and environment gave you the agency to make the choices you did, or mitigated their outcome?

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Interconnectivity



Reflection on Community

- What was one decision you made recently because of the impact it would have on someone else?
- What historical and current social decisions have been made that limit the choices people are able to make?
- What populations have been impacted most by those decisions?

Go Deeper: [Understanding Choices In Their Voices](#)



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Reflections & Discussion Questions

Leaving Judgements at the Door

'Why' is a defining question of humankind. One of the characteristics of the human psyche that makes us different from other species is that from a very young age, we start questioning cause and effect—we want to know, 'Why?' **Asking 'why' is how we go beyond simply acknowledging the events around us to understanding them.**

So it's not surprising that one of the first thoughts that jumps into our mind when we encounter someone living outside is, "Why are they there?" In and of itself, that's not a bad question. We do need to understand the circumstances and factors that lead to people becoming unhoused.

But although wondering why someone is unhoused isn't a bad thing, assuming we know the answers is. There isn't one reason, as Rebecca told us, why someone becomes unhoused. It's up to us to have the mental discipline to suppress our instincts to form judgements based on a singular encounter. The 'why' needs to remain a question.

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Leaving Judgements at the Door



Reflection on Self

- Have you ever made use of mental health and coping resources? Which were most helpful and why?
- How does being housed affect our ability to keep our personal struggles private?
- How would being unhoused change that?



Reflection on Community

Think about the most recent headlines you've seen covering homelessness in San Francisco.

- What words are the most common?
- Does the language used keep the 'why' a question, or does it imply or lead us to assume a specific answer to why a group of people are experiencing homelessness?
- What is the effect of the way we talk about the issue of homelessness on how we think about solutions to homelessness?

Go Deeper: [Homelessness in San Francisco](#)



Reflections & Discussion Questions

If/Then: What's Possible

Creating solutions to homelessness sounds like an overwhelming charge. But movements are made of moments, and the individual decisions each of us make can cumulatively change the course of lives and societies.

[Listen to Kurt's story](#)



Reflection on Self

- What was one interaction with a stranger that positively impacted your own life?
- You can't create solutions to homelessness on your own—but what could you do to show up for your unhoused neighbors?



Reflection on Community

- What would it look like for our workplaces to adopt a more compassionate and helpful relationship with our unhoused neighbors?
- Do you know what resources are available in the neighborhoods in which you live and work for people living outside?
- How could you increase awareness about existing resources amongst the people in your networks?

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Multiplying Your Impact

William Wilberforce was a critical force in the abolitionist movement to ban the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the early 1800s. One challenge he issued to those around him that's very relevant to what we've talked about is this, **"You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."**

Thank you for going through the NeighborGood Guide. You've confronted your own mental constructs, biases, and assumptions. You've examined who you are, both as an individual and as a member of the community around you. You've considered yourself and your choices, your agency and your privilege. You've asked questions and learned answers about solutions to homelessness.

Reflections & Discussion Questions

Multiplying Your Impact

Continue your journey by sharing the NeighborGood Guide with others.
[Access the NeighborGood Guide Kit](#)



Reflection on Self

- What did you learn about yourself over the course of the NeighborGood Guide?
- What's changed about the way you see yourself as a resident of San Francisco?
- What's different about the way you see your neighbors?
- What are your personal next steps to becoming a better neighbor?



Reflection on Community

- What are your spheres of influence?
- Who else in your life might benefit from experiencing the NeighborGood Guide?
- Who are three people you could share the NeighborGood Guide with?

We've created a resource, The NeighborGood Guide Kit, to give you some ideas about how and where you might share the NeighborGood Guide with the people in your community.

